

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 8, 2019

The Honorable Heather Wilson
Secretary of the Air Force
3000 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

The Honorable John W. Henderson
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Energy
1665 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary Wilson and Assistant Secretary Henderson:

We write to reiterate our concerns with the continued lack of urgency to address water contaminated by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at and around the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base (Wurtsmith) in Oscoda, Michigan. The U.S. Air Force needs to request sufficient funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 to address drinking and surface water contaminated by PFAS from Wurtsmith and stop delaying a cooperative agreement with the state of Michigan so that broader clean-up actions can begin.

Despite our success in securing a new \$14 million set-aside for addressing PFAS contamination at decommissioned bases in the FY2019 appropriations bill, the Air Force inexplicably decided to reduce by \$800,000 the amount of funding originally budgeted for Wurtsmith this year. While we recognize that PFAS contamination is impacting bases nationwide, we have received no rationale for this decision. It has been more than five years since the Air Force first became aware of PFAS contamination at Wurtsmith, and this shortsighted decision will only increase the cost to U.S. taxpayers and the Department of Defense (DoD) as more drinking and surface waters in Oscoda and AuSable are impacted.

In addition, the longer the Air Force takes to address the contamination at Wurtsmith, the greater the potential for human exposure to these chemicals. We are very pleased that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry – in coordination with the DoD and through authorities we provided in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2018 – is proceeding with a PFAS exposure assessment. We are very concerned, however, that Oscoda was not selected as one of the sample locations.

It is imperative in FY2020 that the Air Force budget for aggressive actions to address PFAS contamination at Wurtsmith and work expeditiously to finalize a cooperative agreement with the state of Michigan.

We look forward to receiving your response detailing how the Air Force plans to rectify the contamination at Wurtsmith going forward.

Sincerely,



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator